



## Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie Volunteer Position Description

**Title:** Midewin Butterfly Monitor

**Purpose:** All ecological monitors at Midewin play a vital role in monitoring various species and habitats throughout restored and remnant habitats at Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie. The data collected by volunteers is used to evaluate management needs and effectiveness, resulting in better ecological management practices. Butterfly monitors help directly with part one of Midewin's mission to conserve, restore, and enhance the native populations and habitats of fish, wildlife, and plants.

The Illinois Butterfly Monitoring Network (IBMN) engages citizen scientists in the process of collecting quantitative data on butterfly populations throughout Illinois and Indiana, including several sites at Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie. The IBMN is responsible for new applications, training, field trips, data management and other types of guidance. Midewin only coordinates site-specific details at the start of and throughout the monitoring season. Please visit the IBMN website at <http://www.bfly.org/> to join, fill out a new application, and read more about this program. If you are interested in monitoring a site at Midewin, please mention that in the Site Preference box on the IBMN application. If there are sites available, volunteers will work with the Midewin Volunteer Coordinator for site-specific details.

**Duties and Responsibilities:** Designated areas will be assigned and monitors will be asked to choose a route through as many habitat types as possible. Monitors will record all butterfly species they recognize along their pre-planned route. Monitors are required to survey their area 6 times during butterfly season (June 1- August 7). Volunteer hours and data must be entered online *after each individual survey within 48 hours*. The data gets entered into the Illinois Butterfly Monitoring Network website and the volunteer hours get entered into Volgistics.

**Department and Location:** Under the direction of Midewin's Ecologist, volunteer time and data is contributed to Midewin's Restoration Team. Assigned monitoring areas may be anywhere within Midewin's property of 19,000 acres.

**Qualifications:** Experience is not necessary, but monitors must be willing to learn 25 new butterflies each year. At first, monitors may need to catch and release certain butterflies to confirm their identification. Photography for later identification is encouraged. Peak conditions for butterflies are warmer than 75° and slight to no breeze. Monitors must have flexible schedules to be available for a survey when weather conditions are ideal. Surveys must take place between 10am and 3:30pm. Monitors are responsible for their own transportation which involves driving on rough roads with gravel and potholes. This type of work is easier and safer with a partner, so this should be highly considered (partnering is required for monitors without a reliable cell phone).

**Time Commitment:** Monitors gain more experience every year and therefore data gets more thorough and accurate, so a multiple year commitment is most useful. Monitors are asked to survey their assigned area, over the same route, 6 times during butterfly season (June 1– August 7). Four of these six surveys must take place before July 20. Monitors should spend 1-2 hours each visit in order to thoroughly cover their area.

**Training:** IBMN offers field trainings and online training materials at <http://www.bfly.org/>. Additional responsibilities could become applicable or available to this position in the future that might require additional training and/or certification. These additional responsibilities will be determined by the program managers and offered to selected volunteers. New monitors will be partnered with an experienced monitor for the first season. New monitors need to keep in mind they will be coordinating schedules with their experienced partner(s). Butterfly nets are provided and close range binoculars are available for checkout. Field guides must be purchased. Additional resources are also available on Midewin's butterfly monitor webpage at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/midewin/workingtogether/volunteering/?cid=stelprdb5368200>.

**Working Conditions/Physical Effort:** *Monitors are covered by the Volunteer Agreement (Form 301a) while performing duties described by this position description during the season(s) listed or scheduled shifts.* Monitors must read, sign and consent to the U.S. Forest Service Job Hazard Analysis, which includes emergency plans, safety requirements and recommended best practices. Monitors may work in variable conditions including:

- Exposure to outdoor weather conditions & allergens
- Walking on uneven ground and/or tall vegetation
- May be working near hazardous plants or insects
- Butterfly season temperatures can be extremely hot with little to no breeze.

**Benefits:** Volunteer monitors further the citizen scientist movement by contributing valuable data. Monitors can observe long-term progress towards the ecological restoration of Midewin. Midewin's volunteer staff receives ongoing recognition from their supervisor and other staff. Volunteers that contribute three or more individual volunteer visits in the fiscal year will receive an invitation to an annual volunteer recognition banquet in November. Midewin's volunteer staff receives the bimonthly Prairie Telegraph. Volunteers may be featured in the telegraph, newspaper articles and/or US Forest Service success stories. Awards can be received for outstanding, innovative and/or long term, core volunteers.

**Related Opportunity:** Lead Butterfly Monitors have additional responsibilities that can include leading communication throughout the season, announcing position related off-site training opportunities or presentations, training new monitors, organizing data and/or writing short articles.